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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 17, 2011

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Majority Leader Comments on Civil Justice Subcommittee Votes to Increase Efficiency in Supreme Court, Increase Accountability in Judicial Nominating Commissions

Tallahassee, Fla. – Florida House Majority Leader Carlos Lopez-Cantera (R-Miami) today issued the following statement regarding the Civil Justice Subcommittee’s passing of the Proposed Committee Bills (PCBs) on Judicial Efficiency and Judicial Nominating Commissions. Judicial Efficiency legislation creates two co-equal Supreme Courts, the Supreme Court of Civil Appeals and the Supreme Court of Criminal Appeals. Judicial Nominating Commissions (JNCs) legislation reduces the number of members on each JNC, provides that the governor directly appoint all members of JNCs, and aligns JNC terms to run concurrent with the governor’s.

“I applaud the Civil Justice Committee’s hard work on this innovative way to help solve the current inefficiencies in our Court System and for bringing greater accountability to the judicial nomination and appointments process.

“The current process of reviewing death penalty cases is hindered by significant delays. The Florida Supreme Court has made no advancement to improve this process, which can postpone the administration of justice or lead to wrongful convictions. By creating one Supreme Court with civil jurisdiction and one Supreme Court with criminal jurisdiction, each would be better equipped to resolve cases in a timely and efficient manner.

“The legislation on Judicial Nominating Commissions increases executive accountability in the judicial nomination and appointments process by requiring that the governor take sole responsibility for selecting and appointing members to the JNC and aligning current JNC terms to the governor’s term. By doing so, this legislation adds transparency to an obscure system by removing members from the judicial nominating commissions who are not solely selected and appointed by an elected official responsible to the citizenry.”

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